

and high schools in Tallahatchie County, and was most recently named the 2011 Tallahatchie School District Parent of the Year.

She volunteers her time and energy to her local Boys and Girls Club, in an effort to help educate and deter the youth from engaging in counterproductive activities such as joining gangs and committing violence in their schools and communities.

She works in conjunction with the Mississippi State Department of Health to organize speaking engagements and forums on gangs and violence in Tallahatchie, Panola, Quitman, Sunflower, and Coahoma counties.

Mrs. Powell believes that parents, teachers, and community members should work together and maintain strong lines of communication in an effort to ensure that the students of today receive adequate education and training to thrive in an ever changing world.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you and our colleagues join me in recognizing Mrs. Donnie Powell for her many contributions to education and serving her community.

HONORING SERGEANT-AT-ARMS WILSON "BILL" LIVINGOOD

HON. STENY H. HOYER

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 6, 2011

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, next month this House will lose a dedicated public servant. Wilson "Bill" Livingood, our Sergeant at Arms, will retire after seventeen years keeping us safe. Since 1995, he has stood watch over the People's House and all of its members, staff, and visitors, overseeing the security of this chamber, the Capitol, and Congressional office buildings.

Under Bill's leadership, the House has adapted its security measures to meet new challenges faced since September 11. He has been a driving force in enhancing screening procedures while ensuring that Americans can still easily visit the Capitol and meet with their representatives.

Bill Livingood's life has been spent in service to our nation and to protecting the institutions of our democracy. Before his long service as Sergeant at Arms, Bill was an agent of the U.S. Secret Service for thirty-three years, placing his life on the line to protect our commander-in-chief.

While I have no doubt that the strong voice with which Bill has welcomed U.S. presidents and foreign dignitaries into the House chamber has become iconic, I believe he will be remembered here most for his warmth and kindness and for his deep love of country. I have been fortunate to call him a friend and can attest to the attention and respect he commands from all who have known him. It has been a pleasure serving with Bill throughout his tenure, and I wish him all the best in his retirement.

I join with my colleagues from both sides of the aisle in thanking Bill for his long career of distinguished service to the people of the United States and, in particular, to their House.

CONGRATULATING THE LINN HIGH SCHOOL WILDCATS BOYS CROSS COUNTRY TEAM

HON. BLAINE LUETKEMEYER

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 6, 2011

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating the Linn High School Wildcats Boys Cross Country team for winning the Class 1 Missouri State Championship.

The young men and their coaches should be commended for all their hard work throughout the regular season and bringing home the state cross country championship to their school and community. The boys have relied on each other throughout the season, providing one another with encouragement and displaying true team spirit. They won by a mere one point, proving that all seven boys were truly needed in securing the victory.

I ask that you join me in recognizing the Linn Wildcats for a hard fought victory and a job well done.

OUR UNCONSCIONABLE NATIONAL DEBT

HON. MIKE COFFMAN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 6, 2011

Mr. COFFMAN of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, on January 26, 1995, when the last attempt at a balanced budget amendment passed the House by a bipartisan vote of 300-132, the national debt was \$4,801,405,175,294.28.

Today, it is \$15,068,133,903,969.13. We've added \$10,266,728,728,674.85 dollars to our debt in 16 years. This is \$10 trillion in debt our nation, our economy, and our children could have avoided with a balanced budget amendment.

HONORING THE BIRTHDAY OF KING BHUMIBOL ADULYADEJ OF THAILAND

HON. DAN BURTON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 6, 2011

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my congratulations and best wishes to the world's longest serving monarch, King Bhumibol Adulyadej of Thailand, on the occasion of his 84th birthday this past Monday, December 5th. King Bhumibol is beloved by his people and esteemed for his great humility, compassion and proactive engagement with everyday Thais.

King Bhumibol has spent decades in virtually every corner of Thailand, engaging with the Thai people face-to-face, seeking new and improved ways to make their lives better. Since the early years of his now 65-year reign, he has been mindful of the livelihood of farmers and others dependent on agriculture. He made water management a key priority in royal development projects, with the first such project initiated in 1963. Taking a holistic ap-

proach, the King's projects also sought to ensure local residents understand the importance of proper water management to avoid flooding, droughts and pollution.

The King has also promoted sustainable agricultural practices along with soil resource management, to maximize economic success in rural areas and to help farmers become self-reliant. His economic advice based on the "Sufficiency Economy" philosophy, which calls on individuals and businesses to practice moderation and reasonableness, and seek self-immunity against external factors in their pursuit of growth, has been embraced by rural farmers and private businesses alike.

Agriculture, environmental conservation and sustainable development are among the many other areas of King Bhumibol's initiatives to contribute to the progress of Thailand and its people. During the 1960s and 1970s, the King developed an opium crop substitution program that encourages hilltribe people to grow cash crops so that they abandon the drug trade. His initiatives on health—started even earlier in the 1950s—helped Thailand's efforts to eradicate and combat diseases such as leprosy, cholera, tuberculosis and smallpox. These and the scholarship programs he created to support Thais to study medicine and medical advancement overseas have contributed to the development of the country's public health system—today one of the most advanced in Southeast Asia.

King Bhumibol's values, initiatives, and passion for improving life for all Thais have earned him the respect of the people of Thailand. He has also been recognized internationally for his unique leadership, which has uplifted the people of Thailand during difficult times.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to join the people of Thailand—America's friend and oldest treaty ally in Asia—as they pay tribute to King Bhumibol and celebrate his 84th birthday this week.

HONORING MR. JEREMIAH JOSEPH O'KEEFE FOR HIS CONTRIBUTIONS AND SERVICE TO COMMUNITY AND COUNTRY

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 6, 2011

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a World War II hero, entrepreneur, philanthropist and outstanding public servant, Mr. Jeremiah "Jerry" Joseph O'Keefe.

A native of Ocean Springs, Mississippi, Jeremiah Joseph O'Keefe was born July 12, 1923, in a gracious antebellum home constructed by his grandfather. When Jeremiah O'Keefe was 13 years old, the family lost their home during the Depression and relocated to Biloxi, Mississippi. In Biloxi, Mr. O'Keefe attended Sacred Heart Academy high school, where during his senior year he was co-captain of the school's football team.

Mr. O'Keefe was attending Soule Business College when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor in 1941 and he quickly offered to serve his country by enlisting in the United States Navy. He would join the Aviation Cadet Program of the United States Navy in June 1942,

and was commissioned a 2nd Lieutenant in the United States Marine Corps and designated a Naval Aviator on June 16, 1943. In 1945, Mr. O'Keefe, then a 1st Lieutenant, and his 24-plane fighter squadron, "the Death Rattlers," deployed upon Okinawa where they would participate in his first aerial combat. Their assignment was to prevent repeated nightly Japanese aerial attacks in the harbor. An "ace" fighter pilot, Mr. O'Keefe was credited with shooting down a total of seven Japanese airplanes in the Battle of Okinawa, including five in one day. At the age of 21, Mr. O'Keefe became one of the youngest "Aces" in World War II. For his meritorious efforts, he was awarded the United States Navy Cross, Distinguished Flying Cross, the Air Medal, and the Gold Star.

Following World War II, Mr. O'Keefe obtained a degree in business administration from Loyola University and went to work with his father in the family funeral business. In 1958, he purchased Bradford Funeral Service and merged it with the O'Keefe family business to create Bradford-O'Keefe Funeral Home. That same year, Mr. O'Keefe founded Gulf National Life (GNL) Insurance Company. Over the course of several decades, GNL acquired a number of other smaller companies and became the largest insurer in Mississippi with over 200 affiliated funeral homes.

Deeply rooted in politics on the Gulf Coast, Mr. O'Keefe's grandfather was alderman-at-large in Ocean Springs. In 1935, Jerry O'Keefe's uncle, John O'Keefe served as Mayor of Biloxi for two years, before resigning to become an Adjutant General in the Mississippi National Guard. Jerry O'Keefe was elected to the Mississippi State Legislature seven years later in 1959 and served one four-year term. Mr. O'Keefe was elected Mayor of Biloxi in 1973 and served eight years. Known as an energetic and innovative mayor, he was awarded Biloxi's Citizen of the Year in 1976.

As mayor, Mr. O'Keefe was a strong proponent for civil rights and the advancement of the African-American community. While mayor of Biloxi, he confronted the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) by rescinding a permit they received to hold a parade in the town. When the KKK proceeded with the parade, he had them arrested. Mr. O'Keefe was guided by his moral compass and ethical disposition during a time when few stood up against the Ku Klux Klan for fear of retribution. Mr. O'Keefe received death threats and the KKK burned a cross in front of his house. Still, Jerry O'Keefe stood his ground.

After three decades of politics, Mr. O'Keefe shifted his focus to fundraising and philanthropy. He has been a supporter and donor to numerous organizations, schools, and museums. In 1967 and 1975, Mr. O'Keefe received awards from the United Fund Campaign for Distinguished Service to the people of Harrison County. He has been the recipient of the Pine Burr Area Boy Scouts of America's Lifetime Achievement Award. In 1995, he and his wife, Annette, founded The O'Keefe Foundation with an initial endowment of \$10 million. The foundation is the primary financial sponsor of The New Hope Center in Ocean Springs, a center for disabled youth. Additionally, the foundation supports numerous organizations throughout the state and the greater

Gulf Coast region which includes the Coalition for Citizens with Disabilities, St. John's and Mercy Cross High Schools, Habitat for Humanity, Shaw University, Tougaloo College, St. Alphonsus Elementary School, YMCA, the St. Vincent Depaul Society, the Walter Anderson Museum, Boys and Girls Clubs, Christians United of Jackson County, and the City of Ocean Springs.

Mr. O'Keefe and his first wife, Annette Saxon O'Keefe, have 13 children. He and his later wife, Martha, have worked to reinforce family bonds through regular church attendance, Sunday dinners, and family vacations. Mr. O'Keefe is an active member in the Nativity B.V.M. Cathedral.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in expressing my sincere gratitude to Mr. Jeremiah "Jerry" Joseph O'Keefe of Ocean Springs, Mississippi for his service to the state of Mississippi and to this country.

SUPPORT OF H. RES. 440 CONGRATULATING RECIPIENTS OF 2010 WORLD PEACE PRIZE H.H. DORJE CHANG BUDDHA III AND THE HONORABLE BEN GILMAN

HON. ELIOT L. ENGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 6, 2011

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my strong support of H. Res. 440 which congratulates H.H. Dorje Chang Buddha III and the Honorable Ben Gilman for winning the 2010 World Peace Prize.

Recently, I introduced this resolution to highlight the awarding of the World Peace Prize to both H.H. Dorje Chang Buddha III and Congressman Gilman. The World Peace Prize is a very distinguished honor granted by the World Peace Council in recognition of individuals who exemplify selflessness in their devotion to humanity.

I commend H.H. Dorje Chang Buddha III and the Honorable Ben Gilman for their multiple contributions to our society and urge my colleagues to support H. Res. 440.

THE CAMERAS IN THE COURTROOM ACT OF 2011

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 6, 2011

Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, today I introduced the Cameras in the Court Act of 2011 to ensure transparency and accountability in the judicial branch by providing television coverage for open proceedings before the United States Supreme Court.

This is companion legislation to a bipartisan bill, S. 1945, introduced yesterday by Senator DICK DURBIN (D-IL), Assistant Senate Majority Leader, and Senator CHUCK GRASSLEY (R-IA), Ranking Member on the Senate Committee on the Judiciary. The Cameras in the Courtroom Act of 2011 respects the individual rights of the parties appearing before the Court, only

applying to open proceedings. In addition, a majority of the Supreme Court justices may vote to exclude television coverage of a particular proceeding if they decide that such coverage would result in a violation of the due process rights of any of the specific parties before the Court.

This legislation would only apply to those Supreme Court proceedings currently open to the public. Individual Americans are welcome to observe these Court proceedings, but only in an extremely limited number. The Supreme Court has seating for several hundred, however they typically only allocate roughly 50 seats for the general public. And that is what is so troubling. Given the sweeping nature of recent Supreme Court decisions, this limited seating almost screams elitism, secrecy and contempt for the public by this third branch of our government.

I strongly believe that the separation of powers and our system of checks and balances is essential to the successful operation of a democratic society. However transparency and accountability are necessary to ensure that those checks and balances are properly applied, even in the judicial branch itself.

Regardless of the scope of the legislation, Congressional debates and votes on each and every bill are televised and available to Americans through CSPAN. It was not enough for reporters to pass along their accounts of what occurred, nor was it enough for the limited number of Americans who could directly observe from the House and Senate galleries. The entire American public—it was determined—was entitled to know what the Congress was undertaking in its name.

It strains any reasonable precept of transparency to assert that such momentous recent Supreme Court deliberations such as *Bush v. Gore*, *Kelo v. City of New London*, and *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission* were available only to the 50 Americans who were allowed and fortunate enough to be among the chosen few to wait in the queue for public seating.

Americans today live in a world where information is near instantaneous; where with a handheld cell phone they are able to communicate through live video conferencing with nearly anyone in the world. Today's technology allows us to bring events from across the globe to our fingertips in real time.

It is essential that the highest arbiter of the law of our land provide all Americans with the opportunity to observe United States Supreme Court proceedings in a manner that will enable them to form their own opinion through direct observation. Transparency and accountability are the windows through which everyday citizens may observe and protect democracy. Are there risks that some will play to the cameras? Yes, absolutely. Are those risks offset by the public's need, indeed right, to know? Absolutely yes. Sunshine—even in the Supreme Court—remains the best disinfectant against those who might feel that the black robe of life-tenure grants them permanent immunity from accountability for their words and opinions.

I urge my colleagues to support transparency and accountability in the United States Supreme Court and cosponsor the Cameras in the Courtroom Act of 2011.